

Hendon 2, Wycombe Wanderers 0

UNBEATEN Hendon took another step nearer to the Isthmian League championship when they outfought and at times outplayed champions Wycombe Wanderers at Claremont Road on Tuesday night.

Wanderers were eminently disappointing and there were many reasons for their failure. They gave away far too much possession with badly placed passes, never really looked like beating goalkeeper John Swannell due to lack of punch up front, while the defence tended to be caught square by Hendon's dangerous front line of Baker, Bass and Wilsonham.

But what was even more important was their wastage of chances. Once again opportunities were missed but on other occasions the final pass to the build up just wasn't coming.

Hendon, on the other hand, could hardly put a foot wrong. Precise passing, bite in midfield and a mobile defence saw them cruise to two points and Wycombe's first "double" defeat of the season.

MICK DEBUT

Micky Cooper came in at full back for his debut against his former club. It was a tough baptism and Cooper, although steady on the ground, was often beaten in the air. Gerry Olson returned to the side for the injured Rob Williams while Mick Holifield came back for Keith Jameson, also injured.

Wycombe started strongly and took the game to the home side for the first ten minutes. Amos went close after a Holifield flick but Swannell blocked his shot and then Keith Searle's hard volley was again well saved by the England International 'keeper.

Then after 13 minutes Hendon took the lead after a slip in the Wycombe defence. Giant Tony Bass beat both Delaney

and Olson to a free kick—two defenders marking one man—and Wilsonham, left completely unattended, gratefully smashed the ball past the stranded John Maskell.

After the breakthrough, Hendon really turned it on with some highly skilful football, reminiscent of Wanderers themselves last season. Baker led the attack with some brilliant running while Bass flicked the ball off accurately with both head and feet.

Wycombe's replies were sporadic. Again Searle lacked enough support up front from Holifield and Amos to make any impression.

In midfield, Pritchard, Hutchinson and Gane were outplayed by Bobby Childs. Walter Koller and Rod Haider who were always looking for the quick break and were the constant source of possession for the home side. These three were also handed much of the ball on a plate through poor Wycombe passing. Derek Gamblin being the main offender.

Maskell, whose handling of the high ball was faultless, was forced to save at the feet of Bass in the 36th minute after Childs had been allowed to make 30 yards before delivering the final pass. One of Wanderers' few chances was created in the 42nd minute and fell to Johnny Hutchinson, who had scored a goal at Claremont Road on his last two visits. Amos beat two defenders and slipped the ball onto Hutch's favourite left foot but he screwed it wide.

For a time, Wycombe played some of their worst football of the season, and even the basics began to go wrong. A good example came when both Holifield and Amos put crosses behind goal. Thankfully it didn't last for long and after that spell of the worst, the Blues played some of their best football of the match just before the interval. The build ups began to click and passes were strung together well. But the half time whistle halted their progress.

HENDON WARN

Hendon handed out a warning in the very first minute of the new half when Peter Deadman cannoned the ball against an upright after a Childs cross was half-cleared. Then three minutes later Hendon went two up—again due to poor defensive work. Corner specialist Childs flighted a curling cross for Bass to soar above the defence and send in a header. Two defenders were on the line but the ball found its way into the back of the net.

There were only glimpses of Wycombe in the second half and for the most part it was Hendon who looked most likely to find the net. Rod Haider was given ages to size up a shot after 51 minutes but Maskell went down sharply to save. Wilsonham then beat Delaney in the 55th minute but was robbed on a second goal by another Maskell save.

Delaney limped off to be

replaced by Ian Rundle after 68 minutes—the Wycombe skipper again going through an unhappy match where he failed to reach top form.

Hendon became too individualistic in their search for goals in the later stages with certain players trying to do too much. Wanderers waited for mistakes that never came and although Holifield was the pick of the forwards, even his work rate could not produce a chance in the closing minutes.

Larry Pritchard made one of his all too rare contributions to the match with a cracking drive from long range which Swannell pushed over the top for a fruitless corner. But 30 seconds later play was back in the Wycombe half with Wilsonham sending a violent cross-shot narrowly wide.

Hendon were well pleased with the crowd of 1,250. Their average gate at Claremont Road is 700 and for a side who are Amateur Cup holders and way out front in the League, they deserve far better support for the standard of football they produce.

Hendon: J. Swannell, P. Deadman, G. Hand, P. Fry, A. Phillips, R. Haider, R. Childs, J. Wilsonham, A. Bass, J. Baker, W. Koller, sub. I. Denholm (not used).

Wycombe Wanderers: J. Maskell, M. Cooper, D. Gamblin, G. Olson, J. Delaney (Sub. I. Rundle 68 mins.), A. Gane, M. Holifield, L. Pritchard, K. Searle, J. Hutchinson, A. Amos.

Referee: L. Sinkins.

Half time: 1-0. **Goal scorers** (Hendon), Wilsonham (13), Bass (49).

Attendance: 1,250.